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Editorial

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Welcome to the January 2020 issue of The British Student Doctor!

At the start of this year we look ahead expectantly to a new decade, bringing important milestones in our personal and professional lives; graduations, new jobs, weddings, births, successes and challenges. One of the most complex issues of our generation is the impact of climate change on health. 2019 saw the issue brought to the forefront of our collective societal consciousness and in the guest editorial “Climate action: No time to waste”, Professor Hilary Graham from the University of York, calls members of the medical profession to take immediate action for the “climate emergency”. The rise in infectious disease is one implication of these events and medical student, Jessica P J Larwood, from the University of Oxford, puts into perspective the realities of a climate crisis.

The impacts of a climate crisis will also impact rates of skin cancers. A case study by foundation doctors Elizabeth Jones and Chantal Patel, along with consultants Dr Vivek Mudaliar and Mr Amir Ismail from the University Hospital North Midlands of a rare case of basal cell carcinoma showing vascular invasion. This article highlights a good example of doctors of all grades working together to advance medical literature.

As climate change will impact the poorest nations first, as will our decisions on future ethical publishing models. Professor Paul Bowman from Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media and Culture, reflects in his editorial on the vital role of diamond open access in the academic community, and the principles that The British Student Doctor Journal endeavours to uphold.

Biyyam Meghna Rao from the University of Liverpool deals with the contentious issue of “Should Obesity Be Considered a Disability?”. Given the rise in incidence of obesity, its impact on health and the wider societal impacts of this terminology, this is a debate that will be increasingly important in healthcare in this new decade.

Another contentious issue is an ‘Opt-Out system for organ donation’, which is explored by Niha Mariam Hussain from the University of Birmingham Medical School and Dhruv Soni from Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry. Continuing with the theme of health controversies, Niha Mariam Hussain and Sanjeev Chaand Sharma from the University of Birmingham discuss the population-level intervention of flour fortification with folate to prevent cases of spina bifida and its complications. Flour fortification has already been introduced in the United States, and the British government will soon be considering its position.

Looking ahead to future advances, Dominic Atraszkiewicz from University College London, summarises the current role of deep brain stimulation in the management

of Parkinson's disease. This novel intervention has the potential for development in the coming decade.

Finally, as healthcare professionals, how do we react to a patient death? Often, we are too busy to process the emotion from the event. In her insightful reflection, Marisol Vasquez discussed the impact that a patient's death can have on healthcare professionals and the role that empathy can play in medical training. We also hope that this is an area that will hold an important position in medical curricula in the 2020s.

As always, we extend our gratitude to our hard working and dedicated editorial team, peer reviewers, faculty advisory board and our publisher, Cardiff University Press. Over the past four years, this team has produced seven issues of The British Student Doctor – and we look forward to continuing our mission to engage medical students in evidence-based medicine and publishing into the years ahead.

We hope you find this January 2020 issue interesting and inspiring, and we wish you and our planet health and success for this new decade.



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